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Georgia Southern University Athletics



DeBesse Discusses Eagle Offense in Post-Spring Wrap-Up
Off-season offensive depth chart released by staff
Football

Posted: 3/29/2019 11:00:00 AM

Following the end of spring practice, GSEagles.com sat down with offensive coordinator and quarterbacks coach [Bob DeBesse](#) to get his thoughts on the offense and get his post-spring depth chart. Here's the conversation we had with him, along with that depth chart.

Q: You had a lot of new faces at running back. How do you feel that group did this spring?

BD: Coming out of spring, we feel about the same how we did coming out of last fall in that running back is our strongest and deepest position. Two guys come to mind in terms of how they stepped up this spring and those guys were [Logan Wright](#) and [Matt LaRoche](#). Logan really took a step forward from a leadership and ownership standpoint. He had pride in his performance, and also of the entire group. He did some good things for us last year and we're expecting big things from him this year. Speedy matured quite a bit and his play really reflected that. Practice wasn't a grind and he was able to play fast and loose. He played with a lot more confidence and we really saw why his nickname is 'Speedy.' And [J.D. King](#) was another guy who came in and immediately stood out. He showed us why he was a highly recruited kid. He can jump cut and get north and south like no one else we have. He's still learning but he's exciting to get in the mix and we just need to see whether he'll be granted eligibility to play with us this fall.

Q: What areas or players were you most pleased with?

BD: Group-wise, I thought the quarterbacks demonstrated a better understanding of what we were trying to get done in terms of a big-picture mentality. As the spring went on, Shai really picked up the 'why' part of our offense. The running backs competed their butts off and will be our go-to guys, so I'm excited about them. Up front, the returners really had good springs. [Brian Miller](#), [Jakob Cooper](#), [Jake Edwards](#) showed a better understanding of the offense and were more comfortable with it all. We are so far away from where we want to be as a complete offense so I can think more about individuals as opposed to pieces right now. We're trying to develop depth, especially at some positions where we're a little thin or inexperienced like tight end and back-up quarterback.

Q: Do you feel like you have more explosiveness this year?

BD: I hope that's where guys like Speedy and [Wesley Kennedy III](#) come in. I think Shai from a standpoint of understanding and confidence will free him up to be more explosive. [J.D. King](#) provides some of that and [NaJee Thompson](#) really has a chance to be explosive for us. He's a guy who the last four of five practices really turned a corner and showed some things that made us as a staff take notice.

Q: What are your top area of emphasis when preseason camp rolls around?

BD: We have to find some depth and the comes through competitive drill work and competitive team settings. Do we have any young skill guys who can contribute or show that they need to get reps? We're looking for guys who can be explosive and make plays for us and we need to identify who can help us in those areas. We still have some work to do in the passing game and that will be a continuing process for us, especially with how early we are in our tenure here. So those would be what I'm looking for early on.

Q: Who were a couple of under-the-radar or new guys who surprised you this spring?

BD: Off the top of my head, I'd say NaJee and Speedy were guys who really stepped up. A guy like [Javonte McGriff](#), who enrolled in January, came in and didn't skip a beat in moving to college football. We're excited about him and his chances to help us out this year. J.D. was a high profile guy, but he's an under-the-radar guy for us because he hasn't been around. We have to have a true freshman tight end come in and I know that's not about guys who were here in the spring, but those are going to be two young guys coming in who will have to be able to help us out right away.

Q: Were there any position changes of interest?

BD: [Jakob Cooper](#) moving to center from guard is a huge move that not a lot of people noticed. It's a huge move. He was really solid for us at guard last year and now we're asking him to do one of the most difficult things for us and that's snap the ball accurately. That snap sets the whole play in motion in terms of timing so we're asking a lot of him. NaJee went from outside receiver to inside receiver at the slot. The inside guys in our offense come around and take the pitch and get more involved in the run game, so we want to take advantage of his speed and explosiveness. And [Jallah Zeze Jr.](#) moved to outside receiver now. He was at tight end, but he's got that outside receiver mind set. He's a big, athletic guy out there on the edge and if he can learn the offense, he could be one to watch.

Q: Who were the leaders to step up?

BD: Cooper's a leader who took over the challenge at center. If you were going to pick most improved players this spring, I'd say [Brian Miller](#) and Speedy LaRoche. Brian stepped up for us. He could have easily stayed in his comfort zone as a returning starter, but he didn't and Speedy really came along to where he's someone we're excited to see if that carries over to the fall. [Logan Wright](#) had a chance to step up, but his injury late set him back. [Jarrod Leeds](#) is a guy to watch because he has the potential to step up, but hasn't had to do it yet. We didn't really notice him this spring out at tackle, and for an offensive lineman, that's a good thing. He can be a really good player if he puts it all together on and off the field.

OFFENSE (Gun/Pistol Option)

WR (Z): 9, [Obe Fortune](#) (6-1, 190, r-Sr.)
83, [Colby Ransom](#) (5-11, 190, r-Sr.)

SLOT (H): 33, [Malik Murray](#) (6-0, 170, r-Jr.)
26, [NaJee Thompson](#) (5-11, 190, So.)

LT: 70, [Jarrod Leeds](#) (6-4, 270, r-So.)
55, [Jawaski Webb](#) (6-2, 280, r-So.)

LG: 66, [Jake Edwards](#) (6-4, 280, 6th Year)
51, [Aaron Dowdell](#) (6-4, 315, r-Jr.)

C: 64, [Jakob Cooper](#) (6-3, 295, r-Sr.)
71, [Peyton Backer](#) (6-3, 290, r-So.)

RG: 74, [Lawrence Edwards](#) (6-6, 300, r-Jr.)
57, [Javonte McGriff](#) (6-1, 270, Fr.)

RT: 56, [Brian Miller](#) (6-3, 285, r-So.)
50, [Caleb Kelly](#) (6-2, 285, r-So.)

QB: 4, [Shai Werts](#) (5-11, 200, r-Jr.)
17, [Justin Tomlin](#) (5-11, 175, r-Fr.)

RB (B): 39, [Logan Wright](#) (6-0, 225, r-So.)
36, [Matt LaRoche](#) (5-9, 175, r-So.) -or- 12, [Wesley Kennedy III](#) (5-10, 175, Jr.)

TE (Y): 48, [Cam Brown](#) (6-2, 235, r-So.)
44, [Logan Powell](#) (6-2, 225, r-Fr.)

WR (X): 23, [Mark Michaud](#) (6-4, 220, Sr.)
81, [Darion Anderson](#) (6-0, 185, r-Jr.)